2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER I

FIRST YEARS

IT is fortunate for the young Burman that on his first appearance in the world all attention is directed to the mother, and the "little stranger" is left very much to himself till he has attained a stronger vitality. Were it not so, the rival parties of the Dietists and Druggists might quarrel over the relative quantities of the four elements, fire, air, earth, and water, composing the new arrival, and diet and dose him out of existence immediately, in a heroic attempt to attain an equilibrium of forces. The mother indeed is the major point of interest in all countries, but childbirth nowhere entails such penalties as in Burma. Directly the child is born, the mother is rubbed all over with na-nwin (turmeric), and a big fire is lighted as near as the construction of the wooden or bamboo house permits, while rugs and blankets are heaped over her to the extent of the possessions of the family. As speedily as possible the midwife prepares a draught called se sein (green medicine), the composition of which is a tradition with the Wun-swès, and is kept a secret from inquisitive males. This the victim in bed has to drink perpetually during seven days, and for the same period, irrespective of the blankets and the time of year, is heated up with ôk pu. These are big circular or lozenge-shaped bricks. They are heated blazing hot in the wood fire, dropped for a few seconds into a pot full of water, and then wrapped up in cloths and applied to the body of the mother. In addition to this, doses of turmeric are regularly administered, and every now and then

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606 Since the son-in-law has the social status of a son in his wife's family, he has the right to expect his father-in-law to sponsor his career, even more than he expects this of his own father.

A daughter-in-law is expected to regard and treat her husband's father very much as her own father.

603 Grandparent and Grandchild. Because of the great difference in age between these generations, great respect is theoretically due grandparents. In practice, this may be flouted and great indulgence shown to grandchildren. Grandparents quite frequently help in rearing their grandchildren, tell them stories and teach them the Buddhist precepts.

The Life Cycle of the Individual

843 828 Birth and Infancy. When a woman is pregnant her dreams are considered to be especially significant. She is expected to remember those dreams that concern what her child will be like. The welfare of the child is forecast by some dreams. A dream of only one of things that normally come in pairs, such as earrings, bodes ill, possibly death, of the child in infancy. If the woman dreams of her viscera coming out it is indicative of a great future for the child. Persistent dreams of a particular deceased individual are indicative that the child will represent his reincarnation. In all forebodings of ill the normal counter-measure is to consult a Buddhist monk or an astrologer, who may give the woman an inscribed prayer (mantra) to keep or some amulet for the child to wear as protection.

843 Although village women need not avoid any specific foods during pregnancy, strong spices are regarded as harmful.

No supernatural means are employed to influence the sex of the prospective offspring. Certain signs are considered prognosticative. If the pregnant woman's stomach appears pointed, a boy will be born; a flat, broad stomach indicates that a girl is in prospect.

Pregnancy is considered a time of great happiness; the woman is greatly indulged and pampered by all concerned.

● 844 When the time for delivery approaches, any other pregnant women in the household must depart, lest their presence impede labor. Normally the woman's mother, grandmother, or aunt, in addition to a midwife, assists at birth. A fire is prepared in the room in which delivery is to take place and is maintained for ten days.

844 846 As soon as delivery has occurred, the umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife. The afterbirth is wrapped in the mother's skirt and is buried at once in the cardinal direction associated with the day of the week of the baby's birth. The mother is fed an infusion of turmeric, and turmeric paste is rubbed all over her body. She is kept close to the fire and made very warm. For three days she is carefully watched to prevent her from sleeping heavily during daylight hours.

846 The mother is treated as a delicate invalid for about one month and, in some cases, for as long as three months. She is fed only white rice and dried fish. A soup of garlic and banana stems is drunk to promote the flow

Normal and Preventative Measures.

Childbirth; MEE-BWA (Fire-Birth). U Myaing gives a short description of the handling of childbirth: 844

> "In the process of birth, the umbilical cord is severed with a flat bamboo. The midwife then washes the baby, wraps it up in cloth and puts it to sleep. After delivery saffron is mixed with water and given to the mother to drink. It is also smeared on the mother's body. After one week she is given hot baths once a day for three days in succession,'to bring out the sweat'. There are no costs for delivery. Midwives do it free of charge. However, the family is obliged to give them presents of Kingyis, clothes, etc., but never money. Furthermore, it is perfectly all right even if no presents are made."

Ma Aye Myaing gives a more complete description of the entire course of pregnancy and labour, followed by the initial treatment of the new-born infant: 843 844 846

> "During the first four months of pregnancy, the expectant mother experiences occasional spells of dizziness and palpitation, and after a while begins to vomit once a day early in the morning until the time for labour. Two days before the onset of labour, pain begins to be felt in the abdomen and in the back. A mixture of saffron and water was taken internally three times a day and hot brick was applied twice a day for one week. The cost of saffron for one month is Rs. 3/-. The patient is made to perspire by boiling herbs known as "Thanat-ywet" and'Sin-kho-ywet' in a pot and placing the pot in a covered place where the patient had to sit andperspire. The midwife visited her for seven days and applied massage to the abdomen. The umbilical cord was cut by the midwife. In cutting the cord, a silver coin was placed underneath and the cord was tied by a string. The navel cord dropped after three days. During the first week after labour, a mixture of "Yin-pya" and saffron also had to be taken to prevent haemorrhage. The infant was fed after three days, when the milk appeared. On the third day after labour, "saffron smoking" was given, and if the patient felt sleepy she had to smell "sa-mon-net". This day is known as "Thwe-thit-laung-de-ne" and is regarded as an important day. Great care is taken, as it is believed that any shock or excitment is fatal. The patient is not allowed to oversleep in the daytime. That is the reason why "sa-mon-net" is given."

[435]

Ma Aye Myaing also reported an abortion on the third month of pregnancy at Kyaunggon on their way to Rangoon. This was due to the rigors of the evacuation. No treatment was taken.

Menstruation; YAR THI LAR. (Season-coming). Menstruation for Ma Aye Myaing started at the age of fifteen years, then disappeared for seven months, after which it appeared again and has occured regularly since. For this, she takes a mixture of jaggery and ginger. Jaggery for one day costs one anna and ginger costs .33 annas. The black longyi worn at this time absorbs the discharge and does not show the stain. The upper classes in towns now use western pads in public, but black longyis are still in use in private. 841 [117]

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844●

as a roller, and as the aunt from whom she is learning embroidery went into confinement quite recently, she has returned home to the camp. When this aunt had her child, Daw Aw Zar had to go and keep her company for a period of twenty days. Ma Aye Myaing made one or two visits to inquire into her progress. The actual delivery was performed not by Daw Aw Zar, but by someone else, a midwife. When Ma Aye Myaing gives birth to her child the other relatives are sure to offer help, especially if she had the baby in her own home. However, there are only about ten families from Pathwe in Rangoon and out of that number only two or three will be able to come. There would be no need to ask them to come - they would come of their own accord if they heard the news. At present they live in distant parts of Rangoon town. In Pathwe, on an occasion like this everyone comes to ask after the health of the mother and child, even though they may be no relations at all. On the seventh day after birth the house is washed and all visitors to the house are provided with scented water to wash their hair - and it is also sent to those elders who are unble to come. The water is scented with the cream of TAUNG-DAN-GYI, NATHAPYU and KALAMET roots. Enough scented water is provided for about 60 visitors. Most of the visitors are women and girls - very few young men come.

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In Rangoon it is very easy to earn two or three rupees in one day as labourers, while in Pathwe even the worker who worked at the INS for a monthly wage was paid only twenty to thirty rupees. But to offset that, the prices in Pathwe were very much lower than those in Rangoon. MGAPI workers earn Rs. 10/- a month, and the foreman for the MGAPI workers is paid Rs. 15/- a month. This salary of ten rupees was more than sufficient for buying decent clothing and other necessities. These men had to be fed by their employer. The IN workmen who earned twenty to thirty rupees a month had to find their own food.

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U Myaing has made some friends among his fellow workers in Rangoon and has visited the house of one of them, but even this was not a social visit, as he went there to enquire about their work.

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
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THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Birth and Infancy. When a woman is pregnant her dreams are considered especially significant. She is expected to remember those of her dreams that concern what her child will be like. The welfare of the child is forecast by some dreams: a dream of only one of things that normally are paired, such as earrings, bodes ill, possibly death, of the child in infancy; a dream of her viscera coming out indicates a great future for the child. Persistent dreams of a particular deceased individual are indicative of whose reincarnation the child will represent. In all forebodings of ill the normal counter-measure is to consult a Buddhist monk or an astrologer, who may give the prospective mother an inscribed *mantra* (prayer) to keep or some amulet for the child to wear as protection. 843 787 [751]

Although the Burmese woman need not avoid any specific foods during her pregnancy, strong spices are regarded as harmful. [262]

No supernatural means are employed to influence the sex of the prospective offspring. Certain signs are considered prognosticative: if the pregant woman's stomach is pointed, a boy will be born, whereas a broad, flat stomach indicates a girl is in prospect.

Pregnancy among the Burmese is considered a time of great happiness; the woman is greatly indulged and pampered by all concerned.

When the time for delivery approaches any other pregnant women in the household must depart, lest their presence impede labor. Usually the woman's mother, grandmother, or aunt, in addition to a midwife, assists at birth. A fire is prepared in the room in which delivery is to take place and is maintained for ten days. 844

As soon as delivery has occurred, the umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife. The afterbirth is wrapped in the new mother's skirt and is buried at once in the cardinal direction associated with the day of the week of the baby's birth. The mother is fed an infusion of turmeric, and turmeric paste is rubbed all over her body. She is kept close to the nearby fire and made very warm. For three days she is carefully watched to prevent her from sleeping heavily in daylight hours. 846

The new mother is treated as a delicate invalid for about a month and, in some cases, for as long as three months. She is fed only white rice and dried fish. A soup of garlic and banana stems is drunk to promote the flow of milk. She is not permitted to read, sew, or to do anything that will "arouse or stir the blood." [262] [853]

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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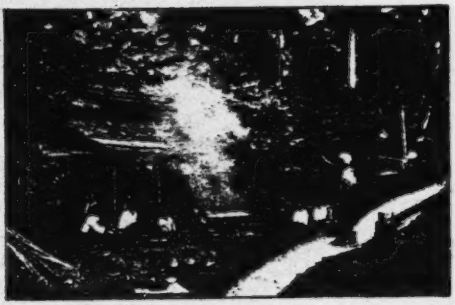

282. PREPARING TAWTHALIN OFFERINGS (p. 186).

at the temples in the same spirit. *Thèbônzedi* are erected on the day of a sick person's planet, and decorated with flags according to the years of age. Here Buddhism, which knows of no vicarious merit (or demerit), is tainted by a survival of animism (p. 188). The merit of the act is intended to cancel the demerit of some troubled spirit which is seeking to possess the body of the sufferer. Offerings are likewise set apart for the troubled spirit in the forest, to divert him from the sick person. When an epidemic of cholera occurs, the whole village sets up a din at sunset with bamboo sticks, to frighten the demons away. But many minds are averse to such superstitions, and they seek for natural explanations. They ascribe disease to states of the blood, to "heats" and "vapours." The cooling qualities of nitre are extolled for the one, and the cordial effects of spice for the other. Dietetic questions interest every-
758 body, and everyone has his or her pet nostrum. Very little operative surgery is
752 attempted as compared with India and China—merely the opening of abscesses and setting of bones. Hare-lip and cleft palate, and the cognate deformities, appear to be frequent. The dressings applied to wounds and sores are chiefly turmeric, slaked lime, *nîm*-leaves.

Successful lithotomies and other major operations, and the boon of chloroform, have spread the fame of western surgery in a vastly wider circle than it can reach itself. The sick are tenderly nursed by the Burmans,
[482] and never abandoned in panic fear as happens in epidemics among the hill-tribes. There are few greater sources of religious merit than ministering to
844 the sick. During the puerperium, the Burman custom is to main-

283. BURMAN CARRIER.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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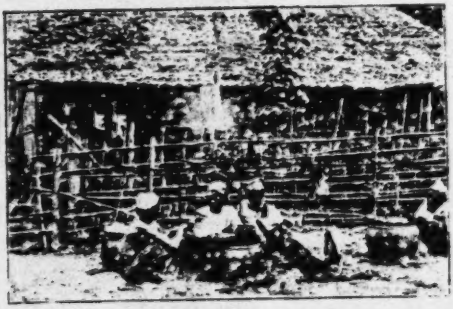

283. PEDLARS.

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tain a fire of billets on a special hearth as big as the couch, and placed alongside of it, for five or seven days. The antiseptic property of the smoke may be of value, but the relaxing effect of the artificial heat is believed to be a reason why the Burman women are so much less hardy in this particular than the neighbouring races. The hospital of the Lady Dufferin Fund is helping to spread a more enlightened practice. The ratio of insane in the population is about a quarter of that of Western Europe and America, but is double that of India.

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Almost the only dealer who hawks his goods in the street is the seller of oil (*hnanzi*, No. 282). He uses a light spring yoke of the wood of the *zi*-tree, the heavier form of which is seen in No. 283. By its springiness the yoke maintains the load at an even level, thus saving waste of work. As much as a hundredweight is carried for long distances. In merely shifting goods at warehouses, carriers will move two hundredweight. They earn six to twelve annas a day. The only vegetable oil used for burning is the oil or resin of the *ka-nyin* (No. 362). Chips are soaked in the wood-oil and made up into torches (*mídaing*) with leaves of the pandanus. The oil is obtained by hewing deep recesses into the butts of the trees for it to collect in, and firing these from time to time to induce a fresh flow. In the valley of the Irawadi, the crude earth-oil from the wells at Yenándyaung is burned in open lamps. This is the earliest petroleum known to commerce, under the name "Rangoon oil." In recent years petroleum has also been found in Arakán. The out-turn from the Burma oilwells in 1898–99 was thirty-two million gallons, valued at

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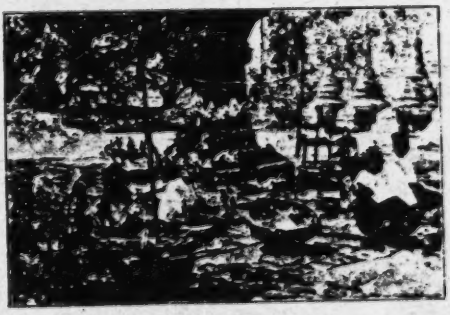

288. TOY AND FLOWER STALLS